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Publication of the  
**Staten Island Antiquarian Society, Inc.**

Headquarters: Old Perine House  
1476 Richmond Road, Dongan Hills, Staten Island

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**HISTORY—STORY—LEGEND**  
of the  
**Old King's Highway**  
now the  
**Richmond Road**

STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

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*Price 25 Cents*

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**The Richmond Road begins at Bay Street, Stapleton.  
Its length is traversed by the Richmond trolley.**

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**¶** These publications will include the History, Family Traditions, Folk-lore and Legend of Staten Island. They will be issued at irregular intervals as material is secured. Ultimately it is hoped to gather them into what will be a convenient and interesting Guide to and Story of Staten Island.

**¶** Owing to the recognized difficulty in gathering information, and the ever present uncertainty that that which is secured is correct in all its details, the Society trusts that those who know Staten Island will assist in the final revision of this work. Until final publication it will not be too late to make corrections and additions, and the Society will appreciate any information of such a nature. Communications may be made to C. G. HINE, who has the matter in charge.

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## STATEN ISLAND

Staten Island, lying as it does opposite the entrance of New York Harbor, was naturally visited by the early explorers and, as its convenience and fertility were great, it was soon apportioned among the first settlers. Verrazano discovered the Island in 1524; Henry Hudson, on September 2, 1609, when he called it "Staaten Eylandt" in honor of the States General of the Netherlands, in whose interests his expedition was sent out.

The Indians were quickly evicted and few, if any, of their traditions remain, though evidences of their former occupancy are found at many points. Without any idea of private ownership in land—or probably much understanding of what they were doing—they sold the Island as often as a purchaser could be found who would pay a few copper kettles or bright colored blankets: First to Michael Pauw, in 1630, the Island having been included in a grant to Pauw by the Dutch proprietors. He called his possessions "Pavonia."

Other proprietors were David Petersen de Vries, 1639; Cornelis Melyn, 1641. There was trouble with the Indians during these early days, due largely to harsh treatment at the hands of the white man. In 1641 and again in 1655 the Indians swept the Island of white settlers, killing those who were not fortunate enough to escape.

It has been claimed that the first settlement on Staten Island was "Oude Dorp," but this is now disputed. Oude Dorp apparently resulted from orders given to Stuyvesant by the West India Company to fortify points on either side of the Narrows, and the village was not built until 1662-63, as in 1661 he informed the Company that all the houses on Staten Island had been destroyed during the Indian wars. Some time after he wrote that the village had been built about a half hour's walk from the Narrows.

The transfer from Dutch to English rule—1664—was peaceable so far as Staten Island was concerned, and the Dutch and English settlers appear to have mingled without an undue amount of friction. French and Germans were also early settlers on the Island, and all of these nationalities intermarried freely. The inhabitants divided their time between the farm and the sea, and beyond erecting mills for



## STATEN ISLAND

the grinding of their own corn and wheat, do not seem to have ventured into the manufactures, except that it is said the first distillery ever erected in North America was on Staten Island.

Staten Island found itself in a peculiar position during the Revolution. The English used it as a huge camp and, consequently, those living here were not free to show sympathy for the American cause, as they rightly feared confiscation of property and molestation of their families. This largely accounts for the charge that Staten Island was strongly Tory during this period.

Sir William Howe landed with troops on Staten Island, July 3, 1776. Possibly because of the overwhelming British occupation there were no important battles fought on the Island, though there were many raids by American troops and a number of skirmishes. The British troops evacuated Staten Island on November 25, 1783, when certain of its Tory inhabitants removed to Canada and Nova Scotia.

After the Revolution Staten Island fell back into its former agricultural ways, and remained so until Southerners discovered its salubrious summer climate and those of New York City began to use it as an abiding place.

The Island became Richmond County, in honor of the Duke of York, in 1683. In 1688 it was divided into the towns of Northfield, Southfield, Westfield and Castleton; in 1860 Middletown was established.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The statements made in the following pages have been drawn from the several histories of the Island; from pamphlets on especial subjects, by William T. Davis and Edward C. Delavan; from magazine and newspaper articles; from the reminiscences of its inhabitants, and from the folk-lore and legend handed down from generation to generation.

Those who have furnished material aid to this pamphlet are: Tunis Butler, Mrs. Crowell M. Conner, William T. Davis, Edward C. Delavan, Cornelius G. Kolff, David J. Tysen and others.

## THE STATEN ISLAND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, Inc.

This Society was formed in 1914-15 for the preservation of historical landmarks in Staten Island; the promotion of popular appreciation of its history; its honored names and noted spots; the collection and preservation of articles and information connected with the early history of the Island, and particularly for the purchase and preservation of the old Colonial homestead at 1476 Richmond Road, Dongan Hills, known as the Perine House.

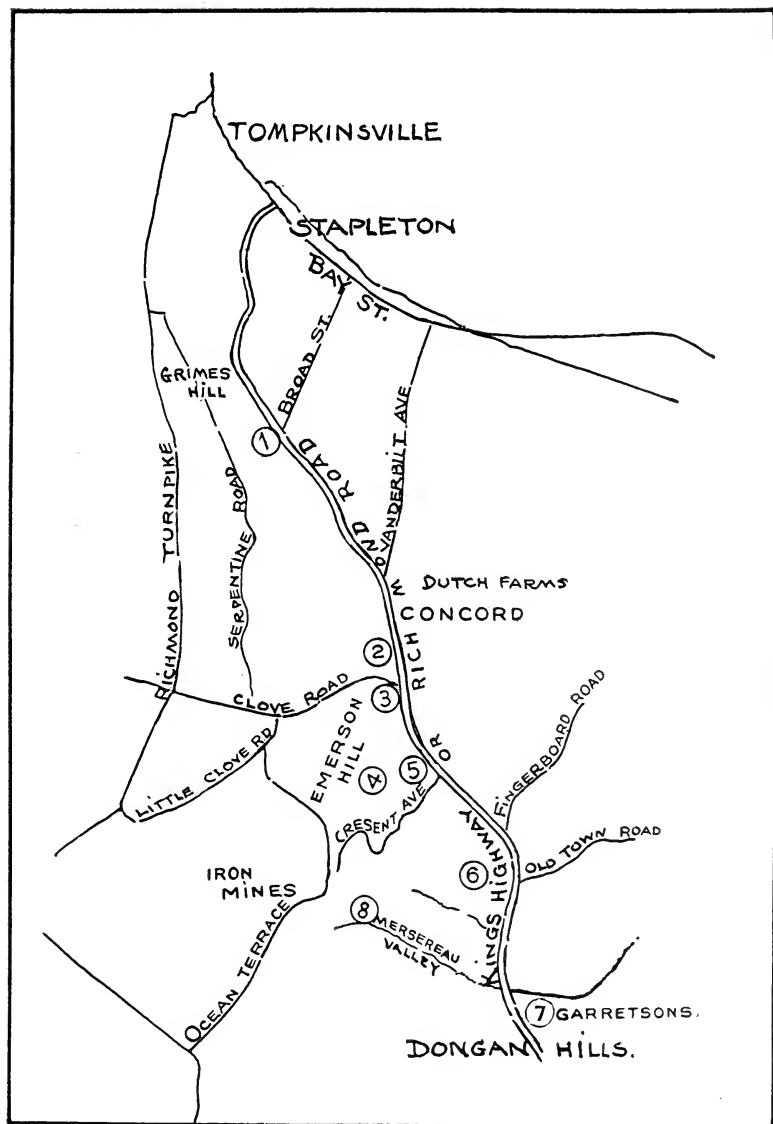
On February fifteenth, nineteen hundred and fifteen, the Society purchased the Perine House, and since that date the building has been thrown open to the public. It is hoped ultimately to make a museum of Staten Island antiquities and a small park of the property.

The Staten Island Antiquarian Society is wholly uncommercial, being supported by subscriptions and dues from members; no salaries are paid to officers, and all moneys received are devoted to necessary expenses in connection with the property, repairs and improvements. Those residing on, or interested in, Staten Island may without great expense become associated with this movement, which, if it receives sufficient encouragement, can be extended to the preservation of others of the old landmarks of the Island.

### ANNUAL DUES

Life Members .....	\$50.00
Sustaining Members .....	10.00
Associate Members .....	3.00

The annual dues are payable to the Treasurer, Carl F. Grieshaber, Fort Hill Park, New Brighton, N. Y.



## RICHMOND ROAD

The Richmond Road begins its career at Bay Street, in the upper part of Stapleton, where were located the old Cole ferry during the Revolution, Abraham Van Duzer ferry, 1788-1817, and, later, the ferry whereby Commodore Vanderbilt started on his way to fame and fortune.

In the "Land Papers" of 1707 a petition is recorded to lay out a cart track to the King's Highway, in those days a common name for all main roads. Early wills and deeds refer to the road as the "Road" or the "Highway." The will of Ann Perine, dated in 1800, in disposing of the Perine House, terms it the "Main Road." In 1801 it was the "main road leading from Van Duzer's Ferry." In 1839 it was "Richmond Road to Quarantine"; 1843 to 1854 the "Road from Richmond Village to Quarantine," the "Richmond Plank Road," or the "Richmond Plank Road to Vanderbilt's Landing."

In September, 1694, the freeholders were called together to lay out "hyghwaies for the inhabitants that live back of the woods to transport themselves and goods to the water sid." It is said that the early white settlers laid out this road eight rods (132 feet) in width to prevent as much as possible the danger from ambush by Indians.

## RICHMOND ROAD AND VAN DUZER STREET

About 1905 the Richmond Road from Vanderbilt Avenue north was rechristened Van Duzer Street.

## STAPLETON

Stapleton is named for William J. Staples, who, with Minthorn Tompkins, laid out the village site.

## (1) HESSIAN HUTS

Somewhere along the foot of Grymes Hill—possibly about the head of Broad Street—were to be seen as late as 1832 the remains of dwelling places of Hessian soldiers, erected during

the Revolution. These consisted of excavations in the hillside covered with heavy planks on which earth had been placed to keep in the heat and keep out the rain. It is said there was no evidence of chimneys, and that the huts did not convey an impression of great luxury.

## TOLLGATE

A tollgate was situated two or three hundred feet southwest of the intersection of Vanderbilt Avenue when the Richmond Road was a plank road.

## (2) BRIMSTONE HILL

The southern end of Grymes Hill, corner of Richmond and Clove Roads, is designated in old deeds as Brimstone Hill. Daniel Wandel of Concord, when asked how this name came, responded: "You could smell the brimstone—can smell it now." The origin of the name is not known.

## (2) JERRY SIMONSON HOUSE

On a small plateau here some fifty or more feet above the road stands the house built during the Commodore Vanderbilt days by Jerry Simonson, who was of Simonson & Bell, shipbuilders. They built many, if not all, of the steamers that Commodore Vanderbilt used in his lines running to the Isthmus of Panama. One of these, the North Star, was used as a yacht by the Commodore for a trip abroad before being put into service; another was the steamer C. Vanderbilt, that the Commodore presented to the Government during the Civil War.

## (3) CLOVE MEETING HOUSE SITE

In 1809 the "Clove Meeting House" (Baptist) was moved to the foot of Emerson Hill, at the corner of Clove Road. It was abandoned some time before 1877. The site is now marked by crumbling tombstones half hidden in the brush, which are readily seen from the highway. This burial ground has a little history of its own. It was given to the pastor in

payment of an unpaid salary, and he deeded it to the groceryman in payment of an unpaid grocery bill; the groceryman deeded it to a liquor dealer to apply on account, and the liquor dealer disposed of it for cash.

#### (4) EMERSON HILL

Before the advent of Judge William Emerson the locality known as Concord was called Dutch Farms.

About 1837 County Judge William Emerson purchased the Peter Wandel farm, which included what is now known as Emerson Hill. He repaired and occupied the farmhouse, which was known as The Snuggery. This was situated at the foot of the hill where it swings back from the road. After residing here for a time he built the stuccoed house that stands halfway up the hill. The Walter Price house on the hilltop was erected by Mr. Folsom, the law partner of Judge Emerson.

Judge Emerson came from Concord, Mass., and it was he who renamed the locality Concord. His brother, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a frequent visitor in his house. He is said to have prepared some of his lectures and to have composed many of his poems here. Henry D. Thoreau lived with the Judge's family during the summer of 1843 as a tutor.

Mr. David J. Tysen recalls being taken, when a boy, by his father to call on Judge Emerson, the two being on intimate terms. He describes the Judge as a splendid specimen of manhood, both physically and mentally. On one such occasion he was entertained by Ralph Waldo, and for some reason not now remembered he [the boy] quoted in a somewhat grandiloquent tone: "A little learning is a dangerous thing." "Yes, young man," responded Ralph Waldo, "but it is not half as dangerous as to think you know it all."

Thomas Munroe resided in the Emerson house during the Civil War. His son, Ralph M. Munroe, writes: "Your mention of the Draft Riots takes me right back. Our darkey coachman had to be hustled off into the woods on Emerson's Hill and cared for during several weeks, until things quieted down. My mother, sister and self were hurried off to Concord,

Mass., for safety, leaving my father to hold the fort. Hearing that a mob was on its way from Stapleton to burn us out, he drove down to meet them, and so managed to jolly them that they gave the job up. Exciting times, for sure! The volunteer troops quartered in numerous camps throughout the Island were, as I remember, equal to if not worse than the draft rioters. No person or thing was safe while they lasted."

## JAPANESE GARDEN

On the slope of Emerson Hill, C. T. Brown has constructed a Japanese garden that shows the art of the landscape architect in high degree. It contains a remarkable statue of a Japanese woman and child posed among the shrubbery on the edge of a brook.

## PHILOSOPHER'S RETREAT

Those who would explore Emerson Hill will find on its summit, 350 feet above tide water, the unique creation of Cornelius G. Kolff, a former resident of the hill. This is the "Philosopher's Retreat," a typical old log cabin with its cheerful wood-fire and its latchstring always hanging out. Mr. Kolff has held many reunions here, when each "philosopher" was presented with a corncob pipe, which later, with his name attached, was hung up in the cabin for use during future visits.

Before Staten Island became a part of the Greater New York, politics were a stink in the nostrils of decency, as the experience of Herman Stutzer amply proved. He was a former owner of the Walter Price house, situated on the northern brow of Emerson Hill. While other property of equal value was not disturbed the valuation of and taxes on this piece were so outrageously increased that the owner left the Island, whereupon the valuation was reduced to its original figure.

## (5) CLINCH HOUSE

No. 955 Richmond Road, corner of Crescent Avenue, is one of the old stone houses. J. H. Garretson, who died

recently, has stated that this was built by Hendrick Garretson about 1780. Hendrick was a noted athlete with a powerful voice that, it is said, would carry a mile. He was a son of that Johannis Garretson who gave his name to the village of Garretson's, now Dongan Hills. After the death of Hendrick the property was sold to John Britton and in the course of time to Charles P. Clinch, and it is still commonly referred to as the Clinch house. Mr. Clinch was Collector of Customs for the Port of New York, and seems to have been as necessary to that service as Crowell M. Conner was to the Richmond County Clerk's office. Both were retained in office continuously, no matter what political party was in power. The house was at one time the home of Mrs. A. T. Stewart, who was a sister of Mr. Clinch.

#### DAN WANDEL FARM

On the eastern side of the road, from about Clove Road to Fingerboard Road, lay the Dan Wandel farm. Fifty years or more ago—no one seems to know just when or why or how the story was started on its travels—much excitement was created by a rumor that some of Captain Kidd's treasure was buried here. No one has been found who has seen the color of the Captain's gold, but there are those who recall the story. A very small stone house formerly stood on the Wandel farm at the junction of the Richmond and Fingerboard Roads.

#### (6) SLAVE BURIAL GROUND

Opposite the Old Town Road stands the Macfarlane house, built during Staten Island's palmy days. The low stone wall which fends this place from the highway is said in its northern portion to pass over an old slave burial ground.

#### (7) PERINE HOUSE

No. 1476 Richmond Road. Original house built about 1680 by Thomas Stillwell. This may have burned and been rebuilt in 1713, or an addition may have been made in 1713. In 1749 Joseph Holmes, innkeeper, purchased the house, and



for some years kept a tavern here. In 1758 Edward Perine married Ann Holmes, daughter and heir of Joseph Holmes. He died shortly after the Revolutionary war began, and his widow, with her six small children, were left to face those rough times. British officers were quartered in the house, and at one time the widow and her entire brood were only allowed one room for themselves by the invaders. The following story of that period is one of the Perine family traditions that has been handed down from generation to generation.

It was then the fashion for women to wear conspicuous buckles on their shoes, the social grade being indicated by the metal of which they were made. Common folks used common metal; those of higher station indulged in silver, which was more precious then than now, as is readily attested by the thinness of our great-grandmother's teaspoons.

Ann Perine was possessed of a large pair of silver buckles which were the family pride, and these she wore constantly, as the skirts of those days were short enough to display such decorations to advantage. One morning a soldier came in for a drink of water, and Ann noticed that his eyes were attracted by the buckles on her shoes. When he left she concluded it would be wise to put them away and substitute a common pair, and after events proved that wisdom is justified of her children. The valuables were hidden, no doubt, in the secret chamber which still exists over the closet in the beam room.

About dusk, and while she was alone in the house, the soldier returned and demanded her silver shoe-buckles, which he had seen on his first visit. She denied the possession of such treasures and thrust forward a foot to show that its decoration was of little value. The soldier insisted that those were not the ones she wore in the morning, but she stuck to her story that she had no others and, finding argument useless, he went to the candle and began to prime his gun. Just at this critical moment, however, a passing neighbor, hearing the noise of controversy, came in to learn the cause, and the defender of Britain's might sneaked out into the dark where evil deeds are hatched.

The place was occupied continuously for 150 years by the Perine family, and on February 15, 1915, came into the possession of the Staten Island Antiquarian Society, which was formed in order to preserve this house, so typical of the homes of our ancestors. The building is open to the public for inspection at all times.

## (8) MERSEREAU VALLEY

During the Revolution a prominent Tory lived on the North Shore, who had a daughter who was as beautiful and charming as all girls should be, and who drew many suitors to her father's door. One Mersereau outdistanced all others in the race, and, at the time our story opens, the young couple had been "cried in the church." But now came on the scene the villain, a young English officer whose attentions were encouraged by the Tory father. The girl, however, showed him no favor, and after months of vain endeavor, concluding that all was fair in love, he plotted with a young rascal to carry the girl off to a deserted hut which stood well back among the trees of this valley, near a spring which formed the headwaters of the brook.

One evening the assistant villain appeared at the young woman's home with the statement that he had been sent to fetch her to the dwelling of an aunt, near Richmond, who was ill. Suspecting no evil she readily came, but when almost opposite the Perine house two men sprang out from the roadside and, seizing the horse, ordered both to alight. One pretended to struggle with the driver while the other led the girl back into the woods, cautioning her that her safety depended on silence.

Up to this point the plot had worked perfectly, but now a strange thing happened. Suddenly and without warning they were attacked by several men who seemed to spring from the ground about them. These seized the Lieutenant—for of course it was he—while one of the party, whom she quickly recognized through his disguise as Mersereau, took the girl to one side. The Englishman was then tied to a tree and told he was to be whipped, and that if he cried out he would be

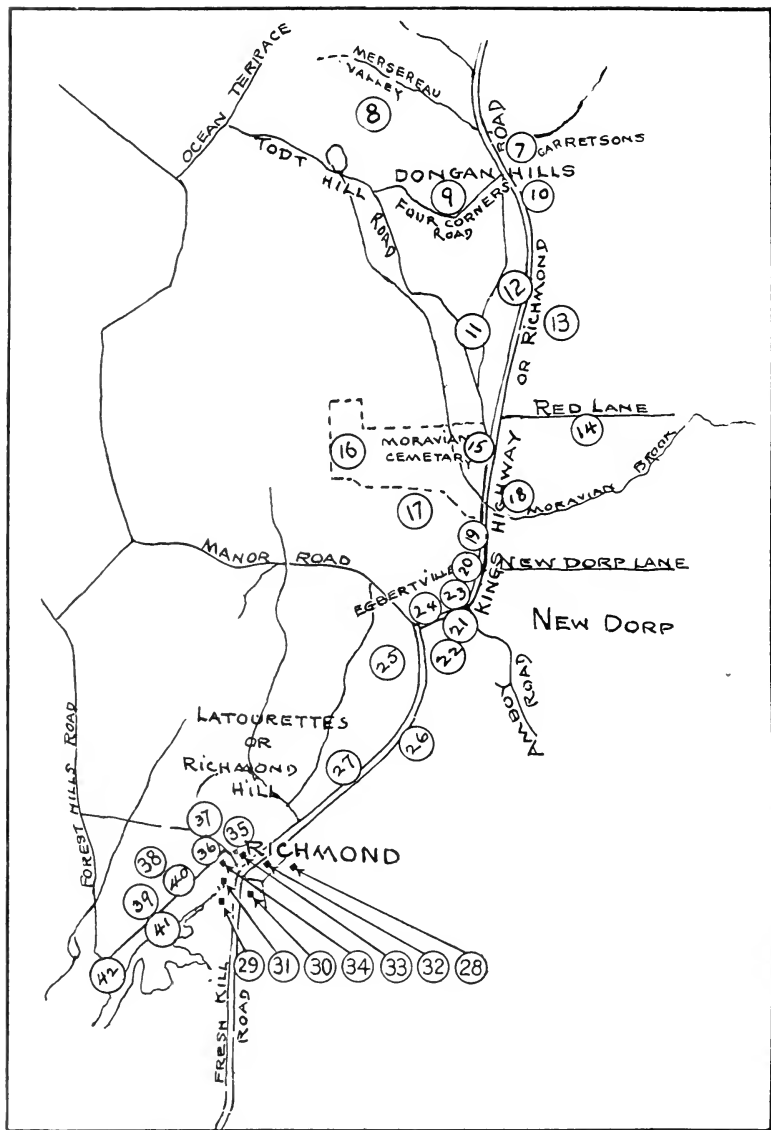
gagged. Two stout men, properly supplied with switches, then proceeded to lay on with right good will, and after thoroughly impressing the gay deceiver in this forceful way with the idea that kidnapping Staten Island girls was not his forte, they gave him a week in which to leave the Island, promising to cut off his ears if he was found hereabouts after that. In the meantime the driver had disappeared. It was never explained how the plot was discovered, but there was a strong suspicion that the driver had, for a consideration, uncovered the conspiracy to Mersereau.

### (9) DONGAN HILLS

The "Yserberg" of the Dutch—"Iron Hill" of the English—part of which forms the highest land on the Atlantic Coast between Maine and Florida, was worked as an iron mine as early as 1644—possibly earlier. The ore here is known as hematite or bog ore, and occurs in pockets on the surface; hence all that shows to-day of the workings are a few shallow basins from which the ore has been dug.

One of the early names of this height is Toad Hill, and various are the reasons advanced to account for the appellation. James Vreeland states that one Todd formerly lived here, and he thinks his name may have been applied to the locality and finally corrupted into Toad. But by far the most picturesque theory is advanced by Daniel Wandel of Concord, who has stated that in his youth, some seventy-five years ago, the local cure for quinsy was to split a toad and bind the parts about the throat, and that as there were certain sandy spots on the hill where toads could always be found, people afflicted with quinsy came or sent here for a toad. The Dutch word "Todt," meaning death, has been substituted of late on the theory, I understand, that an Indian massacre occurred at this point in early days. William T. Davis refers to the theory of one Woods that "Toad" was a corruption of "Towd," a Holland word for old, as the hill stood back of the Old Town, or Towd Town.

About sixty-five years ago "old" Mrs. Stewart dwelt in a little house which stood just inside of what is now the Crom-



well gate, on the brow of the hill. There were many cedar trees about her place and the locality was known as Mrs. Stewart's Cedars. Cart tracks that were used by the public ran hither and thither through these woods, and one day a boy who was driving a team of oxen was killed here. How he was killed seems to have remained a mystery, but it would seem to have been by foul means, for thereafter, at the hour when ghosts walk, a certain cedar would spout a stream of fire that flowed in a great arch over into the hollow nearby. This would appear to have been a supernatural attempt to explain the boy's mysterious death by pointing to the spot where the secret was buried. Tunis Butler, who, though a small boy at the time, was of an inquiring turn of mind, spent many nights on the porch of Mrs. Stewart's house, hoping to see this curious sight, but the fates were against him. If only he had been so fortunate the mystery might have been made plain.

#### (10) EGBERT HOUSE

The ancient-looking frame building, No. 1632 Richmond Road, is known as the Egbert house. Joseph Egbert, Member of Congress from 1841 to 1843, lived here. The place was formerly owned by Anthony Fountain, and came to Egbert by marriage. The house may not be more than one hundred years old.

#### (11) IRON MINE

On brow of hill.

#### (12) SCHOLL HOUSE

The house at No. 1807, recently occupied by Miss Anna McClure Scholl, who, in 1914, under the nom de plume of Geoffrey Corson, published a Staten Island novel entitled "Blue Blood and Red," is said to be two hundred years old. The house was formerly occupied by Joseph Barton, a son of Samuel Barton, and before him by Anthony Fountain.

## (13) BARTON HOMESTEAD

The red dwelling, No. 1910, which is fast wending its way to the scrap heap, is an enlargement and rebuilding of the Barton homestead. One Joseph Barton was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Fifth Battalion of Skinner's Brigade during the Revolution. This was the home of Col. Samuel Barton, Member of the Assembly from 1820 to 1822, and Member of Congress from 1833 to 1837. He rebuilt the house.

## (14) RED LANE

Red Lane, now Lincoln Avenue, the road to Midland Beach, was a farm lane to the Neddy Prane farm. It was "Red" lane because coloring matter from the mine on the hill washed down this way: Neddy Prane was not all a good church member should be; his eyes were very bad, and possibly this was the reason he could not always distinguish the straight and narrow way. Neddy was inclined toward the cup that cheers, and Dr. David Moore, then Rector of St. Andrew's, felt called on to remonstrate, and did so in such direct fashion that he hurt Neddy's feelings. And he, while still under the smart—for Doctor Moore could whipsaw a man with his tongue in a way he was not apt to forget—went to St. Andrew's and, removing his pew, brought it to the farm, where he placed it near the road that all might see—and particularly the Doctor—and turned it into a pigpen.

## (15) MORAVIAN CHURCH

The Moravians first came to America in 1735 to avoid persecution, the first settlements being made in the South; but because they would not take up arms they were compelled to relinquish their improvements, and emigrated to Pennsylvania. Here was headquarters; other places were known as preaching stations. About 1742 services began to be held on Staten Island, and from this grew the present church. The first property was purchased here in 1763; a comparatively small plot on which a church building was immediately erected. This land had evidently been used as a burial ground

for many years before, as stones still standing date back to 1739. The first church building still stands, but was removed to its present site a number of years ago. As it was then the custom of the Moravians to combine church and parsonage under one roof, the old building looks more like a dwelling than a church. Graves were made indiscriminately where there were no trees to trouble the gravediggers: the only rule observed was the placing of the feet toward the east. No charge either for ground or for gravedigging was made until about 1819. During the Revolution the British set the church on fire, but members of the congregation who were watching extinguished the blaze before much damage was done. The present church building was dedicated in 1845. William H. Vanderbilt, who did much for the Moravian church, purchased the George Ebbitt farm, which extended up the hillside and forms a large part of the present cemetery, and gave it to the church. Some time later, when he wished to build the Vanderbilt mausoleum, he bought back from the church the ten acres which are inclosed in the Vanderbilt burial grounds.

The old Cortelyou homestead stood within the limits of the present burial ground, the Norval monument standing on its site.

When the graybeards of to-day were young—or possibly the legend was passed on to them from an earlier generation—there was much talk of two great dogs that raced up and down the top of the cemetery wall. The whips of those passing might cut them in two, but they would instantly grow together again. The origin of the legend has not been handed down.

The tollgates were placed along the plank road, about three miles apart; the second stood about where the entrance to the cemetery is now located.

## (16) VANDERBILT MAUSOLEUM

Built about 1888 by William H. Vanderbilt. Entrance to ground a beautiful woodland road bordered by laurel, rhododendron, etc. View from here over the lowlands and the sea very impressive.

### (17) RANGE LIGHT

On a rise of ground immediately southwest of the Moravian burial ground stands a range light which, in the days before Ambrose Channel, was of vast importance. This, with the Elm Tree Light at the foot of New Dorp Lane, was the guide for mariners when the Swash Channel was the main entrance to New York Harbor.

### (18) OLD HOUSE OPPOSITE MORAVIAN CEMETERY

This may be the oldest house standing on Staten Island. It is not known who was the builder, or when it was built. Its documentary history, in the possession of Edward C. Delavan, shows that on November 1, 1675, this land was included in a tract granted to Lewis Lakeman by Governor Sir Edmond Andros. In 1684 it was deeded to George Cummins and Abraham Lockerman; in 1714 to Rem Vander Beeck; this latter deed included house, barn and fencing. This may or may not refer to the house now standing. In 1719 the place appears to have been in the possession of Isaac Van Tuyl. In 1751 Augustine Creed deeded to Aaron Cortelyou; he disposed of it by will dated in 1789. In 1794 Richard Seaman, son-in-law of Cortelyou, deeded to Joseph Taylor; its present owner is David J. Tysen. It is sometimes referred to as the Cortelyou house, but more frequently as the Taylor-Tysen house.

### (19) PATTON HOUSE SITE

Erected in 1839, opposite the race course at the head of New Dorp Lane, and soon became the political, sporting and militia headquarters of Staten Island.

### (20) ROSE AND CROWN SITE

Almost opposite New Dorp Lane, at what is now No. 2481, stood the old Rose and Crown farmhouse, famous as British headquarters during the Revolution, but destroyed in 1854. According to Mr. Morris, the Rose and Crown farm-



house was built about the middle of the seventeenth century by Jacques Bedell, a Huguenot refugee. Bishop Bedell, a grandson, was born in the house a few years prior to the Revolution. It remained in the family for several generations, descending to the Moores, of which Bishop Richard Channing Moore of Virginia, former Rector of St. Andrew's, was a member. Shortly after the Revolution the Rose and Crown was purchased by Major William Bernard Gifford, a former aide-de-camp of General Washington; after his death, by Leonard Parkinson. In 1844 it was occupied by Richard Conner. Crowell M. Conner, Deputy County Clerk for many years, was born here. During the British occupation of Staten Island it sheltered Sir William Howe; Lord Howe, his brother; William IV., then the youngest admiral in the British Navy; Sir Henry Clinton; Lord Cornwallis; Baron von Knyphausen; Sir Guy Carleton; Generals Cleveland, Pigot, Vaughan, Skinner, Agnew, Jones, Grant, Robertson, Erskine, Matthew, Leslie and De Huyster; Governor Tryon; Colonels Moncton, Simcoe and Billop; Major Andre, and others. It was here that General Howe gave a reception to Margaret Moncrieffe. It is stated that Sir William Howe and his generals first read the Declaration of Independence here, and that the Battle of Long Island was planned here.

## (21) BLACK HORSE TAVERN

Clute states that those of Howe's staff who could not be cared for in the Rose and Crown were quartered here.

The fireplace nearly monopolized all of the west wall. \* \* \* The west wall and the foundations are stone. The second floor consisted of one apartment known as the ballroom. The sleeping rooms were back of the tap. The chimney once took fire and, after it was extinguished, thirty guineas were found in the soot and ashes. Morris states that the Black Horse Tavern was built in 1754 and was known as Wayside Rest until 1776, when it was occupied by members of the staff of Sir William Howe, one of whom was thrown against a large rock near, by a stumble of his horse, and was killed. The

animal was black and noted as the fastest in the British Army, and because of the incident the present name was applied.

That part of the Richmond Road from the Black Horse Tavern to and through Richmond village was formerly known as Stapleton Avenue; the name appears on a map of property as early as 1854.

## (22) CAMP HILL AND THE DUELLING GROUND

Camp Hill is situated immediately back and west of the Black Horse Tavern, merely a gentle swell of pasture land. Morris states that the name was applied by the British; that it was a resort for officers, and was a miniature Monte Carlo, which witnessed the ruin of many a member of the King's Army. West of it is a hollow, then surrounded by dense woods, known as the duelling ground. Gambling and duelling were practised to such an extent as to threaten the demoralization of the English troops. Nearly fifty officers were court-martialed and dishonorably discharged while the army was camped around New Dorp. Among the celebrities who fought duels here are General Robertson; Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe (who fought Colonel Mayhood); Colonel Illig of Howe's staff (who fought Colonel Pentman, Major Andre acting as second). Colonel Christopher Billop is said to have fought General Erskine. The last duel here is said to have occurred about 1790 between a son of Alexander Hamilton and one Lathrop.

## (23) THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE

Date of erection not known. Owned during latter part of Revolution, and probably occupied by Rev. Richard Charlton, who was in the habit of using his sermons as wadding for his fowling piece, as he knew all that was in them. Came into Fountain family about 1840; was occupied by Major Montresor during a portion of the Revolution, and, being in the immediate vicinity of the Rose and Crown and the Black Horse Tavern, it shared with them in the interesting events of that period; but beyond the fact that for a brief

period it was the home of Margaret Moncrieffe, not much appears in the books. The story of Margaret Moncrieffe is interesting. She was the daughter of Major James Moncrieffe of the British Army, and was placed by her father under the protection of the American General, Putnam, in New York, on the plea that her father could not care for her. Once inside the American lines, she was caught apparently in an attempt to convey information to the British. It is thought she was to be used in an attempt to capture General Washington, and when the reason for her being placed within the American lines became apparent, she was promptly returned to her father on Staten Island. Here she was feted by the officers, given a dinner by the British in the Rose and Crown, at which, when asked to give a toast, she created some excitement by giving "General Putnam of the American Army."

There is a small window in the western gable end of the Fountain house, the reason for which is in doubt, but the accepted theory has a kindly human aspect. It is that it was so placed that on dark nights a candle could be put therein to guide the belated traveler on his way—and a very dark and lonesome way it must have been coming through the Egbertville ravine.

#### (24) EGBERTVILLE

The cluster of houses at the point where the road swings around the schoolhouse, now known as Egbertville, has, according to the Leng-Davis map, been known in the past as Tipperary Corners, New Dublin and Young Ireland, from which we gather that the Emerald Isle supplied the raw material for its making.

#### (25) STOUTENBURG HOUSE

Mr. Morris states that the stone house known as Stoutenburg house—No. 51 Fourth Street, Egbertville—and which lies well back under the Richmond Hill, dates from the close of the Revolution. Dr. Richard Henderson, who served as a surgeon in the British Navy, remained behind when the English evacuated, and built this house. He married a Staten

Island girl and settled down here to the practice of medicine, soon to become one of the prominent physicians of the Island.

### (26) MILLSPAUGH HOUSE

No. 396 Richmond Road, the former dwelling of Dr. Isaac L. Millspaugh, a well-known physician who died a few years since. This building stands on the site of the second county poorhouse. The first, which adjoined the Old Red Jail at the northeast corner of the Richmond and Fresh Kill roads, was removed in 1827 to make way for the County Clerk's office.

### (27) "GOLDEN RECTORY"

Almost opposite the lighthouse stands the "Golden Rectory," the former rectory of St. Andrew's, built by Dr. David Moore in 1818. Dr. David Moore was an outspoken man. It is said that he spared no one and that many a parishioner squirmed under the plain talk that came from the pulpit of St. Andrew's. So hard were certain members of his congregation hit, that members of the vestry at one time made a practice of leaving the church during the sermon and playing cards on a flat tombstone—that of Dr. Bailey—that stands just outside the door, apparently to show their indifference to the Doctor's opinion.

The following, written by John Flavel Mines as his boyhood recollection, was found in the Westfield "Times" of May 21, 1887:—

"The only church on that side of the Island was the old parish of St. Andrew's, richly endowed and presided over by the Rev. David Moore, D.D., who, by virtue of having lived on Staten Island for nearly forty years, had become an adopted native and quite as old fashioned as the others. Poor old Doctor Moore! He was a better farmer than a preacher, and the young people found it a weekly purgatory to be compelled to sit in the high back pews and listen to him. Their elders knew his sermons by heart, and went to sleep as soon as the text was given out. Once a year the rector of St. Andrew's

visited New York to attend the Diocesan Convention, and his family went with him to do their shopping. After many years Doctor Moore found himself the senior presbyter of the diocese, and, on one occasion, in the absence of Bishop Onderdonk, it became his duty to call the convention to order. It was a trying position for the ancient country parson, and he would have been glad to run away. In the extremity of his despair he happened to notice the friendly face of the Rev. Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, the elder, in the distance, and he crowded on sail and made a set for him. Tyng greeted his venerable colleague until he stated his case. 'What,' he cried, 'have you been coming to Convention for fifty years, and don't know how to open it yet?' And he turned away in disgust. 'But—but, what shall I say?' was the aged presbyter's plea. 'I'm sure I don't know what to say.' 'Say?' was the stern rejoinder. Go up into the chancel and stand there. The Lord put words into the mouth of Balaam's ass, and He will put words into yours.'"

## RICHMOND VILLAGE

The village of Richmond was presumably settled at a very early period, possibly because it was at the head of navigation of the Fresh Kill. This may sound like a strange tale to those who search for the present stream among the reeds back of St. Andrew's, but as late as 1844 a political excursion of one thousand men came from New York on a steamer which worked its way up the Fresh Kill to Richmond to join in a great political celebration. In 1729 Richmond was made the county seat and has remained such up to the present time. At one time the locality was known as Cuckoldstown.

## FIRST COURTHOUSE

The first courthouse in Richmond was erected between 1727 and 1735. Its location is not known. The building was burned by the British when the Americans made an attack on Richmond; its stout stone walls are said to have stood for many years after.

### (28) PRESENT COURTHOUSE

The present courthouse, which is the third in Richmond, was erected in 1827.

### (28) REZEAU BURIAL GROUND

A portion of the Rezeau family burial ground adjoins the courthouse on the west. Susannah Van Pelt, who lacked but six months and five days of reaching the century mark, was the last of the five generations of Rezeaus to be buried here.

### (29) REZEAU HOUSE

Said to be very old; is now the unpretentious southern portion of a saloon on the west side of the Fresh Kill Road just south of Center Street.

### (30) DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH SITE

Opposite the Rezeau house, on property now owned by William Flake at the southern corner of Center Street, formerly stood the Dutch Reformed Church; date of erection not known. As the first English missionary came to Staten Island about 1702 and held services in the French church at Green Ridge until St. Andrew's was finished in 1711, it is possible that the Dutch church was not standing at that time. This building was burned by the British "because it was a rebel church." About 1798, members of the Reformed Church at Port Richmond secured permission to erect a new house of worship on the foundations of the old, but curiously enough they spoke of it as "The Old French Protestant Church." This building was completed in 1808—was used up to about 1884, when it was abandoned and fell on evil times.

### (31) SECOND COURTHOUSE

No. 49 Fresh Kill Road. This was erected in 1794, and when the present courthouse was built in 1837 was sold and used as a dwelling. It was in this building that the famous murder trial of Christian Smith occurred in 1815. Smith killed a neighbor named Bornt Lake because the latter in-

sisted on crossing Smith's land. There was no doubt of his guilt, but he was acquitted for the very good reason, as given by one of the jurors, that, "if we convict the prisoner the judge will give him two or three months more to live, during which time the county will be obliged to feed him and to keep his cell warm, which would cost a good deal of money. If to this is added the cost of building a gallows, the sheriff's fee for hanging him, the cost of burying him, the expenses will amount to a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars, and all of which will have to be raised by taxation; but if on the other hand we say 'not guilty,' every dollar of this amount will be saved."

### (32) THE COUNTY HALL

Erected 1822. Political headquarters of the county; the scene of many rough and tumble fights between opposing factions. The clubhouse of this part of the Island, where parties and balls were held, and the aim of every sleighing party that ended with a supper and dance. Torn down in 1891.

### (33) OLD RED JAIL AND COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

On the north corner of the Richmond and Fresh Kill Roads formerly stood the Old Red Jail, 1710, one year before St. Andrew's was finished and next to it, and adjoining, the old County Clerk's office, 1827. The former was built when the village was known as Cuckoldstown as "a stronger gaol wherein to secure and retain ye criminals." It was 12 x 14 feet, built of stone, two stories high. The British converted it into a military prison, and it is said its rooms were crowded to suffocation with patriots who were waiting to be transferred to the prison ship "Jersey" or other place of confinement. The latter lay for a time opposite South Beach and later at Sandy Hook. The jail was used as such until 1837. It has imprisoned Indians and slaves, murderers and patriots, with equal disinterestedness. It was burned in 1895

### (34) ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

St. Andrew's Church, with its beautifully picturesque

burial ground, stands on the corner of the Fresh Kill and Mill Roads.

In 1702 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent a missionary to New Jersey and Staten Island. For some years preaching was conducted in the French church at Green Ridge, but about 1708 the parish of St. Andrew's was organized, and in 1709 the building of a church on this site began, it being completed in 1711.

In 1708 Queen Anne presented the church with a silver communion set, a portion of which is still in its possession. In 1715 Queen Anne granted her royal charter to St. Andrew's.

During the Revolution this was the only church where services were not suspended. In October, 1776, the Americans attacked the British troops stationed in Richmond and the latter retreated to the church, which at the time was being used as a hospital. The officer in command of the attacking forces refused to fire on the church, until one of his men was killed, when an assault was ordered and the church carried by storm. Beyond the breaking of windows the building does not appear to have been much damaged at this time. In 1822 the steeple, which was built shortly after the Revolution, was blown down; a new steeple was hardly completed when it was struck by lightning and destroyed. In 1867, and again in 1869, the interior of the church was burned out and the steeple again destroyed. The churchyard contains many interesting and picturesque old headstones. One of these, dated in 1760, refers to the virtues of the lady whose name it bears as follows:—

She Was A Good Neighbor A Tender Mother to Ten Children And A Obedient Wife 35 Years Six Months And 28 Days Whose Uns Potted Characters May Call Her The Patron Of A Christian.
---



A forgotten incident of the days when anti-popish feeling ran high is connected with the Journey vault, which was erected by Albert Journey following the death of his wife. Innocently enough he caused a cross to be cut on its front; this symbol was then considered by the rabid element as strictly the emblem of popery, and the feeling was so bitter that a group of young men got together for the purpose of its destruction, but they lacked the requisite resolution and nothing occurred.

### (35) WHIPPING POST

Where the schoolhouse now stands, just west of St. Andrew's, formerly stood the whipping post, which was used to punish runaway slaves and petty offenders. This is said to have been in use as late as 1821. The City History Club Guide states that it was removed in 1825, two years before slavery was abolished in New York State. The only gallows erected on the Island was at this spot.

### (35) SCHOOLHOUSE

Just when the first schoolhouse was built here is not certain, but it was not an elaborate building, being the typical red schoolhouse of the forefathers. The first teacher who successfully handled the unruly element among the boys was Mrs. Crowell M. Conner, under whose management the attendance more than doubled.

### (36) GOLD MINE

Before the Revolution, Abraham Cole, who lived on the west side of the Amboy Road, about midway between New Dorp and Giffords, was operating a gold mine on what is now the Latourette property. When the Revolution came the mine was closed and the tools used were left inside. Evidences of the opening were hidden as much as possible, and as it was not reopened after the war, the exact location was forgotten; and as the Cole family steadfastly refused to make known the spot, only the tradition remained. Shortly before his death,

a few years ago, Richard Cole, a son of Abraham, stated that the opening into the mine was across the Mill Road from St. Andrew's and across Poverty Lane from the schoolhouse, in what was formerly an orchard, only a few trees of which now remain.

### (37) LATOURETTE HOUSE

The road which ascends the hill from St. Andrew's, now known as Richmond Hill Road, formerly traveled under the engaging title of Poverty Lane. On the brow of the hill and on the right stands the Latourette house, built in 1830. This was formerly Crocheron property, and is said to have come into the Latourette family through marriage.

A curious supernatural occurrence happened in this house so recently as 1913, when the ghost of old David Latourette appeared twice to its occupants. In the first instance a mother and daughter of a well-known New York family, who were sleeping together, were so terrified at the apparition that they refused to remain in the house and left about 2 o'clock a. m. In the second, an old man was seen sitting in the parlor by one temporarily in the house who knew nothing of the previous appearance, and who innocently asked who the stranger was. When a member of the household went to see, no one was found. It was not possible for a stranger to have come and gone without its being known. The description fitted very closely that of David Latourette.

### (38) OLD HOUSE ON LATOURETTE LANE

A lane which leads from the front of the Latourette place down to the Mill Road passes the ruins of an old house said to have been built by Obadiah Holmes, who removed from the New Dorp neighborhood at an early date. During the Revolution this was headquarters of Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe of the Queen's Rangers. Morris states that the Battle of Springfield (N. J.) was planned here.

### (39) BRITISH REDOUBT

On the brow of the hill overlooking the Fresh Kill may still be seen the remains of a British redoubt, now merely a few mounds of earth overgrown with trees and brush. The fort was about 44 feet square. It has been called Look-Out Place, Fort Richmond and Fort Izard.

### (40) LORD HOWE SPRING

About two hundred feet downhill from the ruins (No. 38) is a spring known as the Lord Howe Spring, which probably does not mean much, except that it served its evident purpose when the British held these heights.

### (41) OLD TIDE MILL

Geib's Tide Mill still stands on the edge of Richmond Creek, below the ruins of the British redoubt. It was formerly known as Crocheron's Mill. When it was built is not known, but presumably before the Revolution, as tales of that struggle still cling about its weather-stained walls.

### (42) KETCHUM'S MILL

That stood near the bend in the road, was operated by fresh water from Ketchum's Mill Pond, and back in the woods, farther up Ketchum's Brook, there was still another pond that served as a reservoir for this old mill. The remains of the dam are still to be seen. This was used both as a grist and woolen mill, as is evidenced by an advertisement which appeared in 1828. The fact that the teasel or "fuller's thistle" grew in great abundance near this water power may have had some influence in the establishment of a woolen mill here.

## ATTRACTIVE WALKS, WITHOUT HISTORIC INTEREST, READILY REACHED FROM THE RICHMOND ROAD, NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE

### OVER EMERSON HILL TO OCEAN TERRACE

Starting at the Richmond Road and following the windings of the Douglas Road as it climbs the steep ascent of Emerson Hill, many picturesque bits are encountered before the top of the hill is reached, and many beautiful glimpses of the lowlands and the waters beyond. During this climb the Japanese garden, already mentioned, may be inspected. After reaching the top of the hill a little search will disclose a cart track, the trend of which is westerly, which debouches from the woods onto the Ocean Terrace. Turn to the left on the Ocean Terrace, and when nearing the top of the hill keep watch for a little used cart track on the left. This winds down through fields to the lower level, where one may follow the better traveled road, Crescent Avenue, back to the Richmond Road, or by bearing off toward the right, the south, follow winding cart tracks to the brow of the low ridge overlooking Richmond Road or into Mersereau Valley. The wood paths are many and devious.

### MERSEREAU VALLEY

This valley is still heavily wooded, but a foot-path may be found which for a full half mile leads one through the forest aisles. This ends at the Ocean Terrace on the hilltop. Crossing the Ocean Terrace diligent search will discover more than one foot-path in the woods on the other side. Take any one of these and let it lead you where it will—all are a joy.

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### BACK OF THE MORAVIAN CEMETERY

Just back of the Vanderbilt mausoleum are to be found, among the second growth, several paths. Keeping to the

right, one should come out near the old Nichols place, a large, red brick mansion of fifty or more years ago, which overlooks the Dongan Hills golf links and the lowlands to the sea, the Lower Bay, Sandy Hook and the Highlands, a beautiful stretch of land- and seascape.

By turning to the left one would work out at Egbertville.

Between these two extremes lies a considerable tract containing some fine old beech trees and attractive woodland.

### ALONG KETCHUM'S MILL POND BROOK

At Richmond take the road around St. Andrew's Church—the Old Mill Road. This is still an unmacadamed country road with nothing but a rail fence between the saunterer and the salt meadows. The views over these meadows are as many and varied as the hours and seasons. With a November haze and the soft fall colorings of the marsh grass, or the difference between high and low water; or with any of the innumerable changes that occur during every hour of every day, an artist could garner much here. This passes the old tide mill (No. 41) and the site of Ketchum's mill (No. 42). Turning to the right, the road soon enters a beautiful wood and crosses Ketchum's Brook, finally expanding into a road that a street sign tells us is Forest Hill Road. But before going so far—in fact, at and near the crossing of the brook—one can wander at will through the woods and swamp land, and by keeping along the southern edge of the wood follow an unused and overgrown road that, with a little fence climbing, will take one to the New Springville Road. In times of much rain this is a wet walk.

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